1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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he would ask the *Ten'dan'* and be given a place to build, or a place to farm. After the harvest of the early millet, they would send millet to give "water" to the groves, and so too, after the corn harvest. If blood came from any one, except from the nose, and fell upon the land, the *Ten'dan'* had to purify it. If Chiefs sold any man in exchange for cattle, the *Ten'dan* was given one to give to the land, but when people were sold in a time of famine in exchange for food it was not customary to give anything, but the land would be angry and kill a member of that family who had sold their kinsman, even (extending its vengeance) to a member of their daughter's family who had married far away. The land is a female and "above" is a male. When I sacrifice I call upon my father to "reach" his father who will "reach" the grove. Birth, crops, the getting of wives, good sleep, depend upon the land, who tells *Wen* (God). When two people were about to fight, and the *Ten'dan'* went to stop them, he would lay down his staff between them and no man might shoot arrows over that. The staff is a corn stalk. Any one who disregarded that would die. *Tobeg'* and *taku*[1] have not anything to do with the *Ten'dan'*.

The Position of the Ten'dan' in Cases of Adultery, Theft, Murder, and Suicide.

Adultery: 'The head of the section settled such cases; it was not formerly a Chief's concern.'

Theft: 'In case of theft, the thief, if caught, would be taken to the one who "owned" (i.e. was responsible for) him, who would settle the matter. If the parties could not agree, the matter was taken to the head of the section, who would take it if necessary to the Chief. Since Europeans came we have the *Kambon-nab'*.'[2]

Murder: 'If a man from Nangoot was killed (murdered?) by a man from (say) Pelino, and the slayer was caught, he would be killed by those who chased him. Afterwards, the Pelino people would bring cows, and the people of Nangoot also, and give to the Chief who would then give some to the *Ten'dan'*, keeping the remainder to purify his skins. There is a hole below the skin on which a Chief sits for the blood to flow. The family who had had a member murdered did not receive anything. The Pelino people and the Nangoot people concerned would mix the flour and water which each will bring and make peace. Were the Pelino man, in such a case, to escape, and if the

[1] See Chapter XXVIII.

[2] According to the Chief, these officials were part of the old administration.

[1] [Nankanse concepts apply to persons who have directly and indirectly committed a murder — Analyst.]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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of another medial or maximal lineage of his own or a closely allied clan, hostility between the two units is aroused and their normal relations are thrown out of gear. But usually steps are very quickly taken to set matters right. Either the head of the wronged lineage sends to protest to the head of the seducer's lineage, and the latter, backed by the lineage elders, makes the seducer confess and agree to apologize, or else the culprit himself, aware that public opinion would reprove his action, begs the head of his nuclear lineage to get the head of their medial or maximal lineage to intercede on his behalf with the head of the wronged lineage. It is at the homestead of the latter that the rites of reconciliation are performed by representatives of the two lineages. This is typical of inter-lineage jural relations.

A woman who commits adultery exposes her husband and children to mystical dangers. Among Namoos she is haled to the homestead of the head of her husband's medial lineage and subjected to the ordeal of entering the gateway (*zanɔr*). If she confesses she may enter safely. If not, the lineage ancestors will cause her to get ill if she enters the gateway. This is a very powerful sanction of marital fidelity among women and is one reason why adultery is not very common. Tallensi sum up the role of the lineage head in the sentence, 'All our (lineage) affairs are conducted at the gateway of our lineage head's homestead (i.e. the lineage *zanɔr*—cf. p. 208) (*Ti yɛla kama maana ti kpeem yir zanɔne*)'.

In the old days the men of a medial lineage all assembled at the *kpeem's* homestead before going out to fight. There they all took part in sacrifices to the ancestors and 'ate (*di*)' protective medicine to fortify themselves against the enemy's arrows. Nowadays they do the same before setting out on a communal hunting expedition, for there are many dangers to be faced—accidental arrow wounds, fire, and wild beasts. This is the service for which the *kpeem* is rewarded when he is given a hind leg of every animal slain by the sons of the lineage.

The *kpeem's* functions are most conspicuous in relation to the wives and children of the lineage, for they stand for the greatest common interest of the lineages. It is the reproductive powers of the wives and the existence of children that secure the perpetuation of the lineage and the immortality of the ancestors. The handling of a woman who commits adultery illustrates this. Similarly the lineage elders must be informed of, and the lineage head give his formal consent to, the re-marriage of a widow of any member of the lineage. A widow is in theory entitled to reject a husband chosen for her by her late husband's nuclear lineage and to choose any member of his clan of the right generation. If she does this she must get the consent of the head of his medial lineage and this is binding on the whole medial lineage. Her late husband's nuclear lineage cannot then object to her marrying out of that lineage.

The head of a medial or maximal lineage comes into the formalities of marriage for every member, man or woman, of the lineage, in his capacity as its chief representative in interlineage jural relations. The right to dispose of a girl in marriage is vested in her guardian the head of her nucleur lineage. It is he who receives and owns the bride-

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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586 ●684 We have previously said that the Tallensi have no institutionalized procedure for divorce. This needs to be qualified. A very drastic procedure to which we have referred in our earlier book[1] exists by which a man can get rid of an objectionable wife. It is usually described as 'blowing (on)' (*pɛbh*) a wife, for it consists in the man's blowing ashes over his wife. By this action he expels her utterly from his house with all her brood. He casts her off and disowns her children; and he forfeits the bride-price. Everybody knows of this custom, and it is held to be [413] entirely licit for any husband. The origins of attached lineages[2] are often attributed to clan sisters who were allegedly divorced in this way. But it is impossible to get a record of a single case that has occurred within the last forty or fifty years, or, indeed, within living memory. Though natives say that a man could, if he wished, 'blow on' his wife if she angered him continuously, or if she were dissolute, or were objectionable in any way, in fact her delinquencies would have to be of so grave a nature as to imperil his life and the welfare of the family for a man to cut through his marriage ties irrevocably at such enormous sacrifice.

The example of such a misdemeanour always quoted is concerned with their sexual relations. It is a taboo (*kihɔr*) for a woman to deny her husband's sexual rights over her. She would do so, by implication, if she were to kick him over in the act of coitus.[3] This is a sin of such gravity that the marriage must be dissolved at once or else disaster will come upon both partners. For it means that husband and wife have fallen out so badly with each other that they have come into sexual conflict.

This is implied, also, in a more symbolic way, if the disagreements between husband and wife come to a head in her attacking him with her stirring-stick (*vugɔr*) and his retaliating with his bow (*tap*). The stirring-stick, an indispensable implement for cooking porridge, is one of the emblems of femininity, and the bow, the principal weapon of the chase and of warfare, the chief emblem of manhood in Tale custom and ritual. Men are by convention excluded from the kitchen; women, both by convention and by ritual injunction, from the chase, and from contact with its magical and mechanical appurtenances when they are being [834] used for hunting. One of the very rare occasions on which sexual continence is ritually enjoined on men is when they are poisoning arrows for hunting or war. Thus, a fight between husband and wife with bow and stirring-stick is a fight in terms of their opposed sexuality, a repudiation of the fundamental bond of marriage. It is a sin, and the couple will die if they do not immediately sever their marital relationship completely.

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iv. [2] Ibid., p. 51.

[833] [3] The point lies in the postures adopted by the Tallensi in coitus. As in many other primitive cultures, the woman lies on her back, and the man squats on his haunches between her thighs. She can, therefore, easily push him over with a kick, the natives say.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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Tallensi speak of these two sins against the marriage bond with genuine horror. During my second tour in Taleland, Maankye and his wife died within a few days of each other. Men of the family told me that this was the retribution justly visited on them for having fought with stirring-stick and bow but refusing to part. Such breaches of the marital bond might conceivably provoke a man to 'blow on' his wife, but I have never heard of an actual case. More probably she would be handed over to the lineage elders, to be sent back by them to her father.

Incidentally, the prohibition against keeping a wife who wets the sleeping-mat at night obviously belongs to this class of offences against the marriage bond, though, being involuntary, it is less heinous than the others. The real mystical danger to the husband is that a black ant might crawl through the woman's urine and then sting him. To disgust at the physical fouling of the nuptial bed in this infantile manner, so out of keeping with adulthood, is added fear of the magical consequences of the sexual maladjustment represented by the condition. But here again, in the few cases I know of, the woman was returned to her father through the elders of the husband's lineage.

It should be added that a wife's refusal to allow her husband to have coitus with her on a particular occasion is not regarded as a denial of his rights. This is one of the ways in which a woman gets her own back if she is vexed with her husband. And it would be very uncouth for the man to try to force her to yield to him. 'He coaxes her, until she at last gives him the vagina (*zaŋ pɛn tiu*)', my men friends told me.

The Sexual Rights of the Husband and the Corporate Interests of his Clan

A man has exclusive sexual rights over his wife, as we have said. If any other man has relations with her this is either incestuous or adulterous, and a serious wrong against the husband himself and his effective minimal lineage, section, or clan, according to the structural relations of the husband's and the seducer's effective minimal lineage, section, or clan.

To appreciate the significance of this we must recollect that a woman marries an individual, but marries *into* a lineage and clan. Men, and even women and children, of a clan or lineage speak of the wives of its members as 'our wives (*ti pɣaba*)'. If a man sees the wife of a clansman trying to sneak away in flight from her husband, he will take it on himself to bring her back home by force if necessary. If a man's wife is seduced or abducted by a member of another clan, any of his clansmen will take reprisals, if they get a chance, by seducing or abducting the wife of a member of the offending clan. There were many fights in the old days, as we have learnt, between clans because the wife of one clan was abducted by a member of the other.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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684 577 man does not even have sexual desire for a sister or a daughter. This is the standard, conscious, sexual attitude to a sister and it is in keeping with the conscious attitude about incest with a sister or daughter. Such an act is spoken of as tabooed (*kih*), but it is neither a crime nor a sin. It is simply despicable conduct that the culprits ought to be ashamed of as unworthy of grown persons. Even children talk of copulation with a sibling as something beneath contempt, though, in fact, it is common knowledge that up to the age of about 8 or 9 boys often try to have sexual intercourse with a small girl playmate in their play and for the most part playmates are close lineage siblings. Adults reprove the children if they discover them in this kind of play, but dismiss it as due to childish irresponsibility.[1] This, indeed, is the essence of the general attitude towards incest with a sister or daughter. It is disreputable, because it does not conform to the accepted standards of responsible adult conduct. Only in the case of incest with a full (*soog*) sister is there a feeling of horror. It is felt to be unlucky in a vague way. She is the person of the opposite sex with whom a man is most fully identified. What is more important, she perpetuates their mother's uterine line and therefore stands for the indestructibility of the unique bond between mother and child. Sexual intercourse with her would be almost like incest with one's own mother, and this feeling is extended to distant female uterine kin (*saarət*) as well.

Incest with a mother, a brother's wife, or a daughter-in-law is in a different class of reprehensible acts. It is a taboo for a man even to sit on the sleeping-mat of a woman related to him in any of these ways (and thus, we may presume, symbolically betraying a wish to seduce her). To have intercourse with her is a very grievous sin. It is utterly repugnant to Tale morality.

684 577 539 Incest with one's own mother the natives regard as a thing of such monstrous iniquity that it is ridiculous to conceive of anyone who is not mentally deranged committing it. Incest with a father's wife, other than one's own mother, or a brother's or son's wife is almost as heinous a sin and is regarded with little less horror; but it is known to happen sometimes. In one of the cases that occurred during my stay in Taleland, a man raped his father's elderly wife (his own dead mother's co-wife), whom he called '*ma-pit* (younger mother)'; in the other, a notoriously dissolute young man seduced his father's brother's wife, whom he would [626 533] also describe as '*ma-pit*'. Both were publicly derided in the songs sung during the dances of the Great Festivals. One of the songs about the second man went as follows:

> Badiemaal (his name) you who rape vaginas, Oh!
> Bakyɪlbanɔya (the woman) is a slut.
> Zimbil-Badiemaal is a dog.

[1] Cf. my *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, Memorandum XVII, International African Institute, 1938.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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684 Badiemaal, is this how you behave?
577 Zimbil-Badiemaal will never inherit the (lineage) *bɔyar*;
Why did you copulate with Naaho's wife?

539 *Badiemaal, pɛnzierug, woo-oo!*
Bakyɛlbanɔya a bumbarəŋ.
Zimbil-Badiemaal, u a baa.

Badiemaal, i ɛŋa ŋwala?
Zimbil-Badiemaal ku vaa bɔyar;
I nyɛb Naah pɔya bo?

It was widely held that both of these men would take the first opportunity to get out of Taleland.

613 The Tallensi explain that such acts are so severely reprobated because
684 they cause deep and irreconcilable 'enmity' (*diuŋ*) between father and
577 son, brother and brother, and this is a mortal blow to the solidarity of the family and the lineage. They arouse the wrath of the ancestors. If the injured father, brother, or son does not bring the matter up before the elders of his medial lineage or maximal lineage, he will be struck down by the ancestors. If he does, he must be ritually reconciled with his offending son, brother, or father. But in spite of such a formal reconciliation, 'the enmity remains within'. The sinner will never be able to offer sacrifice to his injured father with a clear conscience, or an injured son to the spirit of his father who so grievously sinned and offended him; nor may two brothers between whom this bitter inner discord prevails sacrifice together. Therefore, as the scornful song about Badiemaal declares, the sinner cannot, with a clear conscience, inherit the shrines common to the lineage; and since a man's sins spiritually taint his children and children's children, the sinner's whole line of agnatic descendants will be virtually outcast from the moral unity of the lineage, even if they are allowed to participate formally in the cult of its ancestors. Again, a man who has seduced his brother's wife cannot inherit her after his death, for he has broken the bond of brotherhood. The incestuous sexual act is sinful because it disrupts the moral relationship of father and son or brother and brother, and thus undermines the solidarity of the lineage at its core. There is a magical deterrent as well, which reflects this. If two men have sexual relations with the same woman and one of them gets ill, the other may not see him; it would cause him to sink and perhaps die; and to shun a sick parent, sibling, or child is the very negation of family solidarity.

593 A man's 'fathers', 'brothers', and 'sons' within the limits of the nuclear
613 lineage are the men who have the most direct interest in his wife, especially in her reproductive powers. They will all be concerned in, and one or other of them will be responsible for, the payment of her bride-price. His children mean almost as much to them as to him. They

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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By contrast, sex relations with the wife of a member of the same lineage or clan outside the range of the inner lineage is a wrong. It is not incest, but the most reprehensible form of adultery. It does not bear the same moral stigma as the corresponding form of incest, nor does it carry religious penalties for the adulterer. Unless the two men concerned have personal cognatic ties, which makes the offence more serious, they are related to each other only as members of related lineage segments. Their personal identity is submerged in the corporate unit, and the offence is interpreted as an injury to the husband's segment by the culprit's segment of a like order. What is a moral and ritual offence in the inner lineage shades over into a misdemeanour or jural injury in the wider lineage. The shift of evaluation is correlated with a change in the intensity though not in the kind of interests involved, and a widening of the span of the unit. The wider lineage has similar but less direct interests in a man's wife than his inner lineage; its unity and solidarity are of the same order as, but less intimate than that of the inner lineage. It has a jural and political unity and solidarity, primarily associated with formal sentiments of amity and mutual loyalty; whereas the cohesion of the inner lineage (based as it is on common economic interests, co-operation and consultation in the everyday affairs of life, contiguous residence, and minimal internal segmentation for jural purposes such as marriage arrangements with other lineages) is primarily moral, and associated with strong emotions of person-to-person amity and loyalty. Thus, beyond the range of the inner lineage, when the customary ritual reconciliation between the segment of the adulterer and the segment of the husband has been completed, the matter is over and done with so far as the public relations of the parties are concerned. No material compensation is made to the husband, and, in the absence of a judicial system, there is no one who can inflict a penalty on the adulterer. The wronged husband may harbour resentment against his wife's seducer; the magical danger inherent in their seeing each other if either is ill remains as a barrier between them; but the corporate unity of the lineage and clan to which they both belong is restored.

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Still, adultery with the wife of a clansman or of a member of a linked maximal lineage[1] (to which the same rules apply) creates dissension in the corporate body. It violates the principle that all men of the clan have a formally equal interest in the wife of a fellow member. It leaves behind rankling animosity that hinders united action. For these reasons it usually arouses an outburst of anger against the wrongdoer. Public opinion is a strong sanction against it therefore. Though cases are far from common, they occur more frequently than the corresponding form of incest. I was able to obtain details of a few cases that occurred immediately before and during my stay in Taleland. In one case the husband and his brothers were so outraged that they fell upon the offender in his

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vi.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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homestead, thrashed him soundly, and destroyed many of his personal belongings. This is typical of the anger stirred up by adultery within the clan. Such action would not be taken against a man who committed incest with a father's or brother's wife, though he might be sent to Coventry for a time. For this kind of incest is, at bottom, a question of conscience. The public reaction with regard to it is of no consequence compared with the vileness of the sin and the wrath of the ancestors.

If a man's wife is seduced by a member of another clan, this is also adultery, as has been mentioned, and a wrong against the husband's clan. If the two clans have local or structural ties, the breach must be mended by the prescribed ritual reconciliation. If they have no such ties, no redress is available to the injured husband's clan. He and his clansmen will try to 'cancel the debt (*lɪrɜg samɜr*)' by seducing the wife of a member of the clan that has wronged him, when any of them gets a chance of doing so.

A man's exclusive sexual rights over his wife are secured, also, by mystical sanctions to which the woman is subject. If she has sexual relations with any man other than her husband she commits a grave sin. It is, as the natives say, 'dirt' (*dayɔt*), mystical defilement. It may bring sickness or death on the woman's husband or children or even on herslf, for it is a serious affront to her husband's ancestors. As we have noted before, adultery (*pɔŋamboɔn*, lit. woman-thing) in a wife is regarded with revulsion not unmixed with real dread. The woman has committed something not far short of sacrilege, for she has flouted the rights of her husband's lineage over her reproductive powers. Hence she cannot be admitted to his home again until she confesses before the shrine of the lineage ancestors, the symbolic incarnation of the lineage itself. The threat to the life of the lineage is felt to be so grave that among the Hill Talis an adulteress is forced to confess at the External Bəyar,[1] the supreme ancestor shrine. Men do not hesitate to use the most callous third-degree methods, short of physical maltreatment, to exact a confession from a wayward wife.

Lastly, a man's wife continues to belong to him sexually after his death until his final funeral ceremonies have been made. Apart from a few ritual observances in sign of mourning, which do not embarrass her greatly, a widow is free to go about her normal life in the interval between her husband's death and his final obsequies. But she is subject to one iron taboo: she may not have sexual relations. It is a much graver sin than during her husband's lifetime, endangering not only her children and herself but her husband's spiritual status. A dead man whose wife has *haa gaba*, broken the mourning of widowhood, as this misdemeanour is called, cannot have descendants given to him as spiritual wards, for his spiritual status is smirched. It is for this reason that, when

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vii.

10: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1955 FE11 Tallensi FE11

But the majority of open names refer to personal, local, family, historical and such like circumstances at the time of the person's birth. Sometimes a proverb or maxim is aptly turned into a name to suit the event. More usually the father or grandfather invents the name and the allusion may be so personal and obscure that only the family members see it. It is among these names that one finds what corresponds to the literary imagination of the Tallensi wisely, wittily, and often movingly expressed.

So luxuriant is the variety of these names that it is possible to quote only a few from amongst the many hundreds in my notebooks. A rare name is GOMNA. It was borne by the son of a chief's headman. He was born on what was, for the chief and his headmen, a red-letter occasion that came around only once in two or three years, the day on which the Governor paid a visit to the area. So he was named GOMNA, the Tale corruption of "Governor". By contrast, take such a name as NOŋDEM-ZUOYA, literally, poor people abound. This is a proverbial saying used to console someone for a loss, particularly of livestock — as by disease — or other property. The father, in this case, had just suffered such a loss. A similar name is WU'UR-BEMI, literally, the name or renown remains. When the child was born, the father said, he and his brothers were poor and insignificant people. But they had their renown as the descendants of chiefs and as men of good character. Their day would come, he said to himself, quoting the proverbial saying that whatever else might be lacking "the name remains". NA'AB-DIYA, the chief has taken office, was born immediately after his grandfather's election as chief and his name commemorates this event. As he explained to me: "I was born when Kunduzoor had just got his chiefship. He said: *'Na'ab diya*, the chief has taken office. If he is a good chief, he stays in office; if he is a bad chief, he stays in office. Nobody can now deprive him of the chiefship.' " This name, therefore, sums up one of the essential laws of Tale chiefship, the law of the inviolability of chiefship. Once installed a chief cannot be unseated. Na'abdiya had a son called SUH-PUDUMƆRA, the heart does not ache. The death of a child had greatly distressed him; but the birth soon afterwards of this son came as a consolation; hence the name.

A very respectable elder had a son of about 25 who bore the name BA-DI-DATA, let them not pull (my ear). When I asked for an explanation there was a burst of hilarity. The youth's father, grinning reminiscently, told the following story. As a young man, being the son of a chief he was a gay spark. Though already married he had an affair with the young wife of a senior chief. At that time the Administration took a serious view of adultery and treated it as a crime. So our friend found himself summoned to answer the charge of adultery and before the very chief whom he had wronged. The penalty was a heavy fine. Now a euphemistic way of talking about a court fine is to call it "tugging" or "twisting the ear" — *daŋ tɔbɔr*, an allusion to a practice sometimes resorted to by irate parents in correcting young children. As it happened, the culprit's wife had just born a son. The fine was announced in court but the wronged chief declared that it was not heavy enough, and demanded that it be increased by a sheep and a pot of beer. At this the culprit protested and begged "let them not twist my ear further". This episode is commemorated in the son's name.